

Doubts Among Allies

Kennedy's Actions on Cuba and Laos Tarnish His Image Among Europeans

By DREW MIDDLETON

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LONDON, May 2.—Viscount Hailsham, Lord President of the Council, lifted his glass tonight in a toast to "the new Ambassador of the United States, our ally, and our friend, and above all our dear companion in the most desperate and exciting adventure in human history." This graceful gesture to Ambassador David K. E. Bruce at a dinner given in his honor by The Pilgrims may be taken as a balance against a growing tendency in the British and other Allied governments to discount the United States Administration as the status symbol of the West.

Doubts and uncertainties about the United States Government and its policies are multiplying among British politicians and diplomats and in the embassies here of other members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

These sentiments result primarily from the collapse of the attempt to liberate Cuba. Secondly, they are the result of the European view of the wranglings of United States policy-making since then. Attempts to apportion the blame for the Cuban failure, zig-zags of the White House, State Department and Department of Defense on Laos, and a perceptible lack of purposeful direction, a quality that had been described as a hallmark of the new Administration, have all contributed to these doubts.

U. S. Facing Important Talks

This is happening when the United States is expected to take charge at the NATO Council meeting in Oslo next weekend and to lead the West in negotiations over Southeast Asia in the conference on Laos beginning May 12 in Geneva.

Some important persons are beginning to ask whether the Administration's policies and ideas are as progressive and enlightened as they seemed six weeks ago, and whether President Kennedy and his associates exert the control over major governmental departments that, from this side of the Atlantic, seems essential if there is to be centralized direction of the undeclared political, economic and propaganda war with the Soviet Union.

The Left in Britain and on the Continent clings to a belief that the Democratic party in the United States is a blood-brother to Europe's social democratic parties. The new Administration's recruitment of such persons as Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., J. Kenneth Galbraith and Dean Rusk for high office appeared to open a new and more liberal era in the United States policy-making.

Honeymoon Is Over

Among governmental officials there was a belief that the United States was now being directed by men who knew exactly where they were going and how they wanted to get there. It was good-by to blunders like the U-2 incident, according to this view, and good-by to misjudgment like President Eisenhower's description of the situation in West Berlin as "abnormal" in a conversation with Premier Khrushchev.

President Kennedy's term had barely started when the honeymoon ended. It would be wrong, however, to say that Britain and the other Allies are completely disillusioned with American leadership.

Yet the abortive attempt to liberate Cuba, reports (denied

in Washington) that the Central Intelligence Agency was involved in the generals' revolt in Algeria, and clear differences within the Government over Laos, have reduced the new Administration to normal proportions.

In Britain, at least, this is disappointing. To lead the West, the British believe, the United States must be larger than life size.

"There's only one problem in Western leadership for the Americans," an elder statesman commented. "The problem's name is de Gaulle. He's a man of stature. Only someone whose own stature and prestige is greater can lead him."

Old Doubts Revived

These views of the immediate problems of personal leadership in the West are combined with deeper and more significant doubts about the philosophy of government prevailing in Washington.

In the last years of President Eisenhower's Administration there was a conviction abroad that American antagonism toward Communism had reached a point of almost hysterical hatred and that an objective analysis of the problems presented by communism had become impossible in Washington. This view has now been revived.

America's resolution has never been doubted in Western Europe. What is doubted is whether the Administration has the political know-how and internal control to achieve the goals set by President Kennedy.